

T H E

Craftsman Extraordinary,

O R, T H E

*Late Dissertation on Parties
continued.*

In which the Right of the People, to *frequent Elections* of their Representatives, is fully considered.

To CALEB D'ANVERS, Esq;

S I R,



IF it was possible for any Man, who hath the least Knowledge of our Constitution, to doubt in good Earnest, whether the Preservation of *publick Freedom* depends on the Preservation of *Parliamentary Freedom*, his Doubts might be removed, and his Opinion decided, one would imagine, by this single obvious

Remark; that all the Designs of our Princes against *Liberty*, since *Parliaments* began to be established on the Model still subsisting, have been directed constantly to one of these *two Points*; either to obtain *such Parliaments as they could govern*; or else to stand all the Difficulties, and to run all the Hazards of governing without *Parliaments*. The Means principally employed to the *first of these Purposes* have been undue Influences on the *Elections* of Members of the House of Commons, and

on *these Members*, when chosen. When such Influences could be employed successfully, they have answered all the Ends of arbitrary Will; and when they could not be so employed, arbitrary Will hath been forc'd to submit to the Constitution. This hath been the Case, not only since, but before that great Change in the Balance of *Property*, which began in the Reigns of *Hen. 7.* and *Hen. 8.* and carried a great Part of that Weight into the Scale of the *Commons*, which had lien before in the Scale of the *Peers* and *Clergy*.

If we look back as far as the Close of the 14th Century, (an *Æra* pretty near to that, when *Parliaments* received their present Form) we shall find *both these Means* employed by one of the worst of our Kings, *Richard II.* That he might obtain his *Will*, which was *rash*. He directed Mandates to his *Sheriffs* (Officers of the *Crown*, and appointed by the *Crown*, for such they were then, and such they still are) to return certain *Persons* nominated by himself; and thus he acquired an undue Influence over the *Elections*. In the next Place, he obliged the *Persons* thus return'd, sometimes by *Threats* and *Terror*, and sometimes by *Gifts*, to consent to those *Things*, which were prejudicial to the *Realm*; and thus he acquired an undue Influence over the *House of Commons*; so that, upon the whole, the arbitrary Will of a *rash*, headstrong *Prince*, and the Suggestions of his wicked *Ministers*, guided the Proceedings of *Parliament*, and became the *Law of the Land*. I might pursue Observations of the same Kind through several succeeding Reigns; but to avoid lengthning these Papers, which are grown perhaps too long already, let us descend at once to the Reign of King *Charles II.* for in that we shall find Examples of all the Means, which a *Court*, that hath common Sense, and a *Prince*, who will not set his Crown on the Cast of a Dye, can take to undermine the Foundations of *Liberty*, either by governing *Parliaments*, or by governing without them.

Now

Now, the first Attempt of this Kind, which King *Charles* made against the Constitution, was this. He improved and managed the Spirit of the *first Parliament* he call'd, so as to render the *two Houses* obsequious to his Will, almost in every Case; and having got the TRIENNIAL BILL repeal'd, he kept the *same Parliament* in Being for many Years, by *Prorogations*; which crept into Custom long before his Time, but were still a modern Invention, with respect to the primitive Institution of *Parliaments*, and wholly repugnant to the antient Practice. Thus he established a *standing Parliament*; which is, in the Nature of it, as dangerous as a *standing Army*; and may become, in some Conjunctions, much more fatal to *Liberty*. When the Measures of his Administration grew too bad, and the Tendency of them too apparent to be defended and supported, even in *that Parliament*, and even by a *Party-Spirit*, he had Recourse to a second Attempt; that is, to *Corruption*; and *Clifford* first lifted a mercenary Band of *Friends to the Government*, against the Constitution — Let us observe, on this Occasion, and as we pass along, that a *national Party* (such a Party as the Court adopts, in Contradiction to such a Party as it creates) will always retain some *national Principles*, some Regard to the Constitution. They may be transported, or surpris'd, during the Heat of Contest especially, into Measures of long and fatal Consequence. They may be carried on, for a certain Time, and to a certain Point, by the Lusts of Vengeance and of Power, in order to wreck one upon their Adversaries, and to secure the other to themselves. But a *national Party* will never be the Instruments of compleating *national Ruin*. They will become the Adversaries of their Friends, and the Friends of their Adversaries, to prevent it; and the *Minister*, who persists in so villanous a Project, by what Name soever he may affect to distinguish himself and his Followers, will be found really at the Head of

a *Faction*, not of a *Party*. But the Difference between one and the other is so visible, and the Boundaries, where *Party* ceases and *Faction* commences, are so strongly mark'd, that it is sufficient to point at them.

I return therefore, and observe, that when the *Spirit of Party* fail'd King Charles, and the *Corruption* he employed proved ineffectual, he resolved to govern for a *Time without Parliaments*, and to employ that *Time*, as soon as he had check'd the *Spirit of one Party* by inflaming that of another, in garbling *Corporations*. He had found by Experience that it was impossible to corrupt the Stream in any great Degree, as long as the Fountain continued pure. He apply'd himself therefore to spread the Taint of the Court in them, and to poison those Springs, from whence the Health and Vigour of the Constitution flow. This was the third, the last, and by much the most dangerous Expedient, employed by the *Friends of the Government* in the Reign of King Charles II. to undermine our *Liberties*. The Effect of it he did not live to see; but we may easily conjecture what it would have been.

The Use I make of what hath been here said is this. The Design of the *Revolution* being not only to save us from the immediate Attempts on our Religion and Liberty, made by K. James, but to save us from all other Attempts, which had been made, or might be made, of the same Tendency; to renew and strengthen our Constitution; * to establish the Peace, Honour and Happiness of these Nations upon lasting Foundations, — and to procure a Settlement of the Religion, and of the Liberties and Properties of the Subjects, upon so sure a Foundation, that there might be no Danger of the Nation's relapsing into the like Miseries at any Time hereafter; This being, I say, the avow'd Design of the *Revolution*, and the Nation being engaged in it, on a Confidence that all this would

* See the Prince of Orange's Declaration.

would be effectually perform'd, the Design of the *Revolution* was not accomplished, the Benefit of it was not secured to us, the just Expectations of the Nation could not be answered, unless the Freedom of *Elections*, and the Frequency, Integrity and Independency of *Parliaments* were sufficiently provided for. These are the Essentials of *British Liberty*. Defects in other Parts of the Constitution can never be fatal, if these are preserv'd entire. But Defects in these will soon destroy the Constitution, though every Part of it should be so preserved. However it happened, the Truth and Notoriety of the Fact oblige us to say that these important Conditions, without which *Liberty* can never be secure, were almost wholly neglected at the *Revolution*. The *Claim of Right* declares, indeed, that *Elections* ought to be free; that *Freedom of Speech and Debates* ought not to be impeach'd, or question'd out of *Parliament*; and that *Parliaments* ought to be held frequently. But such Declarations, however solemnly made, are nothing better than pompous Trifles, if they stand alone, productive of no Good, and thus far productive of Ill, that they serve to amuse Mankind, in Points of the greatest Importance, and wherein it concerns them the most nearly, neither to be deceiv'd, nor so much as amused. These were *Rights*, no Doubt, to which the Nation had an indisputable Claim. But then they ought to have been more than claim'd, since they had been so often and so lately invaded. That they were not more than claim'd, that they were not effectually asserted and secured, at this Time, gave very great and immediate Dissatisfaction; and they, who were called *Whigs* in those Days, distinguished themselves by the Loudness of their Complaints. Thus, for Instance, they insisted, that there could be no † *real Settlement*; nay, that it was a *Jest to*

† See *Considerations concerning the State of the Nation*, by Mr. Hamden, published in 1692.

talk of a Settlement, till the Manner and Time of calling Parliaments, and their sitting, when call'd, were fully determined; and this, in order to prevent the Practice of keeping ONE and the SAME PARLIAMENT so long on Foot, till the Majority was corrupted by Offices, Gifts and Pensions. They insisted, that the Assurances given at the Revolution had led them to think that ‡ the antient, legal Course of ANNUALLY CHOSEN PARLIAMENTS would have been immediately restored; and the particular Circumstances of King William, who had received the Crown by Gift of the People, and who had renewed the original Contract with the People (which are precisely the Circumstances of the present royal Family) were urg'd as particular Reasons for the Nation to expect his Compliance.

The frequent sitting of Parliaments was indeed provided for, indirectly, and in Consequence by the Exigencies of the War, which soon followed the Revolution. This War made annual Supplies necessary; and, before it was over, the same Necessity of annual Sessions of Parliament came to be established, as it continues to this Hour, by the great Alteration made relatively to the publick Revenue. The whole publick Revenue had been the King's formerly. Parliamentary Aids were, in those Days, extraordinary and occasional, and Things came to that Pass at last, that Parliaments were more frequently, or more rarely conven'd, just as Courts had more frequent, or more rare Occasions for such Supplies. But King William began to be, and all our Princes since Him have continued to be, only Proprietors for Life of that Part of the publick Revenue, which is appropriated to their civil List: Although they are intrusted still with the Management of the Whole, and are even the Stewards of the publick Creditors for that Part, which is the private Property of these Creditors. This is the present

‡ *An Enquiry, or a Discourse, &c. published in 1693.*

present State, sufficiently known, but necessary to be mentioned particulary on this Occasion; and This must continue to be the State, unless some Prince should arise hereafter, who being advised by a *desperate Minister*, abetted by a *mercenary Faction*, supported by a *standing Army*, and instigated, like *Richard II.* by the * *Rashness of his own Temper*, may lay rapacious Hands on all the *Funds* that have been created, and by applying illegally what He may raise legally, convert the Whole to his own Use, and so establish *arbitrary Power*, by depriving at one Stroke many of his Subjects of their *Property*, and all of them of their *Liberty*. 'Till this happens, (and Heaven forbid that it should be ever attempted !) *Sessions of Parliament* must be *annually* held, or the Government itself be distress'd. But neither is This such a direct and full Security as the Importance of the Thing requires ; nor does the Security of our *Liberty* consist only in *frequent Sessions of Parliaments*; but it consists likewise in *frequent new Parliaments*. Nay, it consists so much more in *This* than in the *other*, that the *former* may tend without the *latter*, even more than the *Discontinuance of Parliaments*, to the Loss of *Liberty*. This was foreseen by the Wisdom of our Constitution. According to That, altho' it became in Time (by the Course of Events and insensible Alterations) no longer necessary to call Parliaments *once*, or even *twice in a Year*, which had been the more ancient Practice; yet still our *Kings* continued under an Incapacity of proceeding long in Government, with any tolerable Ease and Safety to themselves, without the Concurrence and Assistance of *these Assemblies*. According to the same Constitution, as *Parliaments* were to be *held*, so they were to be *chosen frequently*; and the Opinion that the *holding and Continuance of Parliaments* depended absolutely on the *Will of* the

the Prince, may be justly ranked amongst those Attempts that were made by some Men to set the *Law*, whilst others endeavour'd to set the *Gospel*, on the Side of *arbitrary Power*. This is the plain Intent and Scheme of our Constitution, which provides, that the *Representatives of the People* should have frequent Opportunities to communicate together about *national Grievances*, to complain of them, and to obtain the Redress of them, in an orderly, solemn, legal Manner; and that the *People* should have frequent Opportunities of calling their *Representatives* to Account, as it were, for the Discharge of the Trust committed to them; and of approving, or disapproving their Conduct, by electing, or not electing them anew. Thus our Constitution supposes, that *Princes* may abuse their Power, and *Parliaments* betray their Trust; and provides, as far as human Wisdom can provide, that neither one, nor the other, may be able to do so long, without a sufficient Controul. If the *Crown*, indeed, persists in usurping on the *Liberties of the People*, or in any other Kind of *Male-Administration*; and if the *Prince*, who wears it, proves deaf, as our *Princes* have sometimes been, to the Voice of his *Parliament* and his *People*, there remains no Remedy in the System of the Constitution. The Constitution is broken by the Obstinacy of the *Prince*, and the * *People must appeal to Heaven in This, as in all other Cases, where They have no Judge on Earth*. Thus, if a *Parliament* should persist in abetting *Male-Administration*, or any Way give up those *Liberties*, which They were intrusted to maintain, no Doubt can be made but that the *People* would be in the same Case; since their *Representatives* have no more Right to betray Them, than their *Kings* have to usurp upon them; and by Consequence They would acquire the same Right of appealing to Heaven,

if

* Locke's *Essay upon Government*, Chap. 14.

if our Constitution had not provided a Remedy against this Evil, which could not be provided against any other ; but our Constitution hath provided such a Remedy in the frequent Succession of new Parliaments, by which there is not Time sufficient given to form a Majority of the Representatives of the People into a MINISTERIAL CABAL ; or by which, if This should happen, such a Cabal must be soon broken. These Reflections, and such others as they naturally suggest, are sufficient to convince any thinking Man. 1st, That nothing could make it safe, nor therefore reasonable, to repose in any Set of Men whatsoever, so great a Trust as the collective Body delegates on the representative in this Kingdom, except the Shortness of the Term for which this Trust is delegated. 2^{dly}, That every Prolongation of this Term is therefore, in its Degree, unsafe for the People ; that it weakens their Security, and endangers Liberty by the very Powers given for its Preservation. 3^{dly}, That such Prolongations expose the Nation, in the possible Case of having a corrupt Parliament, to lose the great Advantage, which our Constitution hath provided, of curing the Evil, before it grows confirm'd and desperate, by the gentle Method of chusing a new Representative, and reduce the Nation by Consequence to have no other Alternative than that of submitting, or resisting ; though Submission will be as grievous, and Resistance much more difficult, when the Legislature betrays its Trust, than when the King alone abuses his Power. — These Reflections, I say, are sufficient to prove these Propositions ; and these Propositions set before us, in a very strong Light, the Necessity of using our utmost Efforts, that the true Design of our Constitution may be pursued as closely as possible, by the Re-establishment of annual, or at least of triennial Parliaments. But the Importance of the Matter, and the particular Seasonableness of the Conjecture, invite me to offer one Consideration more upon

upon this Head, which I think will not strike the less for being obvious and plain. It is This. Should a King obtain, for many Years at once, the Supplies and Powers which used to be granted annually to Him; This would be deemed, I presume, even in the present Age, an unjustifiable Measure, and an intolerable Grievance, for this plain Reason, because it would alter our Constitution in the fundamental Article, that requires frequent Assemblies of the whole Legislature, in order to assist, and controul too, the executive Power, which is intrusted with one Part of it. Now I ask, Is not the Article, which requires frequent Elections of the representative, by the collective Body of the People, in order to secure the latter against the ill Consequences of the possible Weakness or Corruption of the former, as fundamental an Article, and as essential to the Preservation of our Liberties, as the other? No Man dares say that it is not; at least no Man who deserves our Attention. The People of Britain have as good a Right, and a Right as necessary to be asserted, to keep their Representatives true to the Trust reposed in Them, and to the Preservation of the Constitution, by the Controul of frequent Elections, as they have to keep their Kings true to the Trust reposed in them, and to the Preservation of the Constitution, by the Controul of frequent Sitzings of Parliament. How comes it then to pass, that we may observe so great a Difference in the Sentiments of Mankind, about these two Cases? Propose the first, there is no servile Friend of Government who will not affect all that Horror, at the Proposition, which every Friend of the Constitution will really feel. Propose the keeping up septennial, nay, the making decennial Parliaments, the same Friends of Government will contend strenuously for one, and by Consequence for both; since there can be no Reason alledged for the first, which is not stronger for the last, and would not be still stronger for a longer Term. These Reasons, drawn from two

or three commonplace Topicks of *pretended Convenience* and *Expediency*, or of *supposed Tranquillity at home*, and *Strength abroad*, I need not mention. They have been mentioned by others, and sufficiently refuted. But That, which may very justly appear marvellous, is This; that some Men, I think not many, who are *true Friends to the Constitution*, have been stagger'd in their Opinions, and almost seduced by the false Reasonings of these *Friends of Government*; though nothing can be more easy than to shew, from Reason and Experience, that *Conveniency*, *Expediency*, and *domestick Tranquillity* may be, and in Fact have been, as well, nay, better secured, under *triennial*, nay, *annual Parliaments*, than under *Parliaments of a longer Continuance*; and as for *Strength abroad*, (That is, national Credit and Influence) it will depend on the Opinion foreign Nations have of our national Dispositions, and the Unanimity of our Sentiments. It must be chiefly determin'd therefore by their Knowledge of the real Sense of the Nation. Now That can appear no Way so much as in the natural State of our Constitution, by *frequent Elections*; and when it does appear so, it must have another Kind of Effect than the bare Resolutions of a *stale, ministerial Parliament*; especially if it happens, as it may happen in some future Time, that the Sense of the Nation should appear to be different from the Sense of *such a Parliament*; and that the Resolutions of *such a Parliament* should be avowedly dictated by *Men odious and hated*, contemptible and contemn'd, both at home and abroad.

But, in the Supposition that some Inconveniences may arise by *frequent Elections*; (which is only allow'd for Argument's Sake;) are such Inconveniences, and the trifling Consequences of them, to be set in the Balance against the Danger of weakening any one Barrier of our *Liberty*? Every Form of Government hath Advantages and Disadvantages peculiar to it. Thus *absolute Monarchies*

Monarchies seem most form'd for sudden and vigorous Efforts of Power, either in attacking, or in defending; whilst, in *free Constitutions*, the Forms of Government must be necessarily more complicated and slow; so that in *These* the same Secrecy cannot be always kept, nor the same Dispatch always made, nor the same Steadiness of Measures always pursued. Must all these Forms, instituted to preserve the Checks and Controuls of the several Parts of the *Constitution* on one another, and necessary by Consequence to preserve the *Liberty* of the whole, be abandon'd therefore, and a *free Constitution* be destroyed, for the Sake of some little *Conveniency*, or *Expediency*, the more in the Administration of publick Affairs? No certainly. We must keep our *free Constitution*, with the small Defects it has, or We must change it for an *arbitrary Government*, free perhaps from these Defects, but liable to more and to worse. In short, We must make our Option; and surely this Option is not hard to be made, between the real and permanent Blessings of *Liberty*, diffus'd through a *whole Nation*, and the fantastick and accidental Advantages, which *They*, who govern, not the *Body of the People*, enjoy under *absolute Monarchies*. I will not multiply Instances, though they croud in upon me.—— Two *Consuls* were chosen annually at Rome, and the *Proconsular Power* in the Government of Provinces was limited to a *Year*. Several Inconveniencies arose, no Doubt, from the strict Observation of this Institution. Some appear very plain in History; and We may assure ourselves that many Arguments of *Conveniency*, of *Expediency*, of preserving the *Tranquillity* of the City, and of giving *Strength* and *Weight* to the Arms and Counsels of the Commonwealth, were urged to prevail on the People to dispense with these Institutions, in Favour of *Pompey* and of *Cæsar*. What was the Consequence? The *Pirates* were extirpated, the Price of *Corn* was reduced, *Spain* was held in Subjection,

Gaul

Gaul was conquered, the *Germans* were repuls'd, *Rome* triumph'd, her *Government* flourished; but her *Constitution* was destroyed, her *Liberty* was lost.— The Law of *Habeas Corpus*, that noble Badge of *Liberty*, which every Subject of *Britain* wears, and by which He is distinguished so eminently, not from the *Slaves* alone, but even from the *Freemen* of other Countries; the Law of *Habeas Corpus*, I say, may be attended perhaps with some little Inconveniencies, in Times of Sedition and Rebellion.— The slow Methods of giving *Money*, and the strict Appropriations of it, when given, may be attended with some Inconveniency likewise, in Times of Danger, and in great Exigencies of the State.— But who will plead for the Repeal of the *Habeas Corpus Act*? or who would not press for the Revival of it, if it stood suspended for an indefinite, or even a long Term? Who will say, that the Practice of giving *Money* without Account, or passing *Votes of Credit*; (by which the *Purse of the People* is taken out of the Hands of *Those* whom the *People* trusted, and put into the Hands of *Those* whom They neither did, nor would have trusted) who will say, that such a Deviation from those *Rules of Parliament*, which ought to be deem'd sacred, and preserv'd inviolate, may be established, or should not be opposed by all possible Means, if it was established?

If all this be as clear as I imagine it is; if the Objections to frequent Elections of *Parliament* do not ly, or, supposing them to ly, if the Danger on one Side outweighs vastly the supposed Inconveniency on the other; nay, if *Laws* and *Institutions*, not more essential to the Preservation of *Liberty* than this antient and fundamental Rule of our *Constitution*, be maintain'd; and if all Men were forc'd to agree, (even they who wish them perhaps abolished) that they ought to be maintain'd, for the Sake of preserving *Liberty*, let me ask again, How comes it to pass that we observe so great a
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Difference between the Sentiments and Reasonings of Mankind about *frequent Sessions of Parliament*, and *frequent Parliaments*; about the *Case* now before us, and all the *others*, that have been mention'd? The only Manner, in which I can account for such an Inconsistency, is this. The Sight of the *Mind* differs very much from the Sight of the *Body*, and its Operations are frequently the Reverse of the *other*. Objects at a Distance appear to the *former* in their true Magnitude, and diminish as they are brought nearer. The Event, that created much Astonishment, Indignation, or Terror in Prospect, creates less and less, as it approaches, and, by the Time it happens, Men have familiarized themselves with it. — If the *Romans* had been told, in the Days of *Augustus*, that an *Emperor* would succeed, in whose Reign an *Horse* should be made Consul, they would have been extremely surprized. I believe, they were not so much surprized, when the Thing happened; when the *Horse* was Consul and *Caligula* Emperor. — If it had been foretold to those Patriots at the *Revolution*, who remembred *long Parliaments*, who still felt the Smart of them, who struggled hard for *annual*, and obtain'd, with much Difficulty, at the End of five or six Years, *triennial Parliaments*, that a Time would come, when even the Term of *triennial Parliaments* would be deem'd too short, and a Parliament, chosen for *three Years*, would chuse itself for *four* more, and entail *septennial Parliaments* on the Nation; that this Time would happen, and the Fruits of their honest Labours be lost in little more than twenty Years; and that it would be brought about, whilst our Government continued on the Foundations they had then so newly laid; if all this had been foretold at the Time I mention, it would have appeared improbable and monstrous to the Friends of the *Revolution*. Yet it hath happened; and, in less than twenty Years, it is grown, or is growing, familiar to us. The uniform
Zeal

Zeal and Complaisance of our *Parliaments* for the *Crown*, leave little Room to apprehend any Attempt to govern *without them*; or to make them do in *one Session* the Work of *seven*; though this would be extremely convenient, no Doubt, a great Ease to *future Ministers*, and a great saving of Expence and Time to *Country Gentlemen*. But suppose, (for I desire it may be remember'd that we reason hypothetically) suppose a *Parliament* should think fit to give, in the *first Session*, all the *Money*, all the *Credit*, and all the *Powers*, necessary for carrying on the Government, during *seven Years*; and then let those Persons, who will be shock'd at this Supposition, and yet declare themselves for *septennial Parliaments*, lay their Hands on their Hearts, and consider whether such an Alteration of the Constitution might not grow familiar to them, and even gain their Approbation. I think it would do so; I am sure, it might as reasonably as the other. They would find the Ease, in one Case, of *little Attendance*, as much as that of *distant Elections*, in the other. The Arguments of *Conveniency*, *Expediency*, *publick Tranquillity*, and *Strength to the Government*, would be just as well apply'd; and if the *Ministers* should, by *Miracle*, make no very exorbitant ill Use of such a Situation, I doubt whether he, who should plead for *annual Parliaments* then, would be much better heard by the same Persons, than he, who pleads for *frequent Elections of Parliaments*, is now. But let not the *Lovers of Liberty*, the *Friends of our Constitution*, reason in this Manner. Let them remember that Danger commences, when the Breach is made, not when the Attack is begun; that he, who neglects to stop the Leak, as soon as it is discovered, in Hopes to save his Ship by pumping, when the Water gushes in with Violence, deserves to be drown'd; and, to lay aside Figures of Speech, that our *Constitution* is not, like the Schemes of some Politicians, a Jumble of disjointed incoherent Whimsies, but a noble
and

and wise System, the essential Parts of which are so proportioned, and so intimately connected, that a Change in one begets a Change in the whole; that the frequent Elections of Parliaments are as much an essential Part of this System, as the frequent Sitzings of Parliament; that the Work of the Revolution is imperfect therefore, and our future Security precarious, unless our antient Constitution be restored in this essential Part; and that the Restauration of it, in this Part, is one of those Methods, by which alone the pernicious Designs of such Men, as we have mentioned in a former Paper, if any such should be ever admitted into Power, (*Enemies to the Constitution under the Mask of Zeal for the Government*) may be defeated.

